

16th Congressional District

California's 16th district encompasses most of San Jose, the capital of Silicon Valley, in the heart of Santa Clara County.

Santa

Clara County boasts the largest Latino and Asian populations in the Bay Area, much of them in San Jose. The 16th is one of the most ethnically diverse districts in the Bay Area and is home to the country's second-largest Vietnamese community.

Nearly half of

Santa Clara County's residents speak a language other than English at home, following a decade of immigration that reshaped the Bay Area's ethnic landscape. According to recent U.S. Census Bureau figures, the Bay Area's foreign-born population grew from 19.5 percent in 1990 to almost 27.5 percent in 2000-more than twice the national average of 11 percent and is even higher than California's total of 26 percent foreign-born residents.

Silicon Valley's vibrant

economic history, begun as a capital of agriculture as the "Valley of Heart's Delight," has been characterized by waves of technology innovations for the past 50 years including defense technology, the integrated circuit, personal computer and the Internet.

Silicon

Valley is a "habitat" for innovation and entrepreneurship, and is a gathering place for researchers, entrepreneurs, venture capitalists and skilled workers who turn new ideas into innovative products and services. This special habitat allows the region to adapt to waves of innovation and adjust to economic cycles. Home to less than 1% of the U.S. population, Silicon Valley was awarded more than 6,800 patents in the recent year-8% of patents awarded to U.S. residents. Not surprisingly, the Bay Area has a highly educated population: 43% have at least a bachelor's degree.

This prosperity in Santa

Clara County has created the highest median household income in the Bay Area at \$74,335, more than twice the nation's average pay of \$35,300. Silicon Valley residents also have a high rate of giving: grants from the two largest community foundations to local public benefit organizations reached a high in 2001 of \$117 million. Workplace giving also reached a new high of \$23 million in the same year.

Major Industry

Technology (Computers, Digital Communications, Semiconductors, Bioscience, Software, Defense/Aerospace), Financial Services, Construction/Transportation/Public Utilities, and Health Services.

Unusual Features

In 1777, as New England colonists were just beginning America's war for independence, El Pueblo de San Jose de Guadalupe became California's first civil settlement under Spanish rule, with a total population of 66. The Spanish-era precursor to modern San Jose was situated near the Guadalupe River, only a short distance from today's city hall. San Jose also served as the state capital for a short time after California entered the Union in 1850.

San Jose also has strong ties to labor leader Cesar Chavez- the first Latino and the first U.S. labor leader in history to be honored with a paid state holiday- spent his elementary school years there before he left school after the eighth grade to work in the fruit orchards of San Jose. In 1948, he married and the Chavez family settled in the East San Jose barrio of Sal Si Puedes (get out if you can).

In 1952, Cesar was laboring in apricot orchards outside San Jose when he met Fred Ross, an organizer for the Community Service Organization, a barrio-based self-help group sponsored by Chicago-based Saul Alinsky's Industrial Areas Foundation. Within several months Cesar was a full-time organizer with CSO, coordinating voter registration drives, battling racial and economic discrimination against Chicano residents and organizing new CSO chapters across California and Arizona.

Cesar served as CSO national director in the late 1950's and early 1960's. But his dream was to create an organization to help farm workers whose suffering he had shared. In 1962, he resigned his paid CSO job- the first regular paying job he had- and left San Jose to co-found the National Farm Workers Association (NFWA) with Dolores Huerta.